

'Boots come with a rich history but aren't cheap'

Doc Martens finally release a motorcycle boot - but is it just a branding exercise?

Dr Martens Garrick boots £359.99

Tester: Simon Brown

Time tested: Three months/1500 miles

What's good? People have been wearing Doc Martens on bikes for years - I've done many a mile in assorted eight-hole Docs over the years - and now the firm have come up with dedicated motorcycle boots. The idea is that they bring traditional styling cues to the bike market - and that's true to an extent: the soles are reassuringly ridged. On the sides, they bounce when you walk and inside you find AirWair tabs. So far, so good. They are also nicely made with quality leather, D30 armour, plush lining and waterproofing. They give the impression they'll last for years.

What's not? I've been wearing Docs for decades and for me they aren't quite faithful enough to the original. Where is the yellow on the sole? And the sole isn't the same colour as the any of the Docs I've been wearing since I was a toddler while those AirWair tabs ought to be on the outside, not the inside. They are pretty clumpy, too. The gear on my Kawasaki ER-6f is set high and I've struggled on other machines. I also need to make sure you wear thicker socks for a snug fit. And there are plenty of similar options for less cash.

Contact: www.tranam.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



DETAILS

1. Feel the bounce
A nod towards tradition but the colour isn't quite right. Buckle-up adjustment doesn't make a huge difference

2. Plush interior
The lining looks great and feels good. Shame those AirWair tabs are hidden away

JACQUES PORTAL

SOLE PROVIDER DOC MARTENS IN SIX DATES

1945 German military doctor Klaus Märtens injures his foot on a skiing trip and makes a cushioned sole from old tyres to aid his recovery. After the war he goes into the footwear business, with air-cushioned shoes sold mostly to German housewives.

1960 The first British Doc Martens are released on April 1, using an air-cushioned sole from the German company, by R Griggs Group Ltd of Northampton. The boots are called 1460s, in reference to the date, and sell mostly to working men. In the 1970s they're adopted by punks and skinheads.

1994 Dr Martens has 2700 employees, worldwide sales worth £170 million and opens a six-storey department store in London. After growing popular with pop stars, the audience has changed again. "Instead of being sold to postmen and policemen, 60 or 70 percent of them are sold to girls," said the managing director at the time.

2002 A sales collapse, and £20m losses, force the closure of five factories, two shops (including the London department store) and the loss of over a thousand UK jobs as production moves to the Far East.

2004 The original Northants factory re-opens to make selected DMs.

2014 The company releases its first bike-specific boots, featuring heavily revised designs and D30 armour.



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Moto One Carbon Energized Base Layers £69.99 (top) £64.99 (bottoms)



Tester: Michael Neeves

Time used: Six months

What's good? Moto One say these seamless base layers are made from 'polypropylene dryarn' joined with 'energized carbon' which allows sweat to evaporate quicker and keeps your heartbeat lower. Although breathable, they're thicker than other base layers I've tried and are a bit too hot to wear when the temperature is very high, but they're perfect for spring and autumn conditions.

What's not? Although superbly made, they're more expensive than your average base layer.

Contact: www.tri-motive.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★

Draggin Jeans Twista, £209.99



Tester: Andy Davidson

Time tested: One year/5000 miles

What's good? Most reinforced bike jeans have horrible looking seams around the knee area that give them away as riding jeans on the very first glance - I like these Twista jeans because they're not like that. They're stylish tight-fit jeans, which don't look out of place in a bar. You can't tell they're lined with Kevlar and they don't have odd seams around the knees.

What's not? It's a shame the jeans only come with a 34in leg, which makes them too long for me. They don't come with knee protection either, and having to buy your own for another £20. Finally, if it's a really hot day then you're going to struggle with sweaty legs.

Contact: www.thekeycollection.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



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Women only Motorcycle Riding Skills Day, £199



Tester: Alison Silcox

Time tested: One day/75 miles

What's good? I'm happy no matter who I am riding with, but found this day really good - no egos and lots of really supportive women all wanting to learn with friendly and knowledgeable instructors. There are plans for further track days next year and it's definitely a way of improving confidence and technique in a safe environment.

What's not? It is a little costly if you are thinking it's just a track day, but with the one-to-one tuition being available all day it's actually not that pricey.

Contact: www.costelloracing.com

Value rating: ★★★★★ **Quality rating:** ★★★★★